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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 30 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that in the context of the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting was held in N'Djamena from 2 to 6 May 2000.

On behalf of the current Chairman of the Committee, I am transmitting to you herewith the report adopted at the end of this meeting, as well as the N'Djamena Declaration (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 77 (a), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ahmat A. **Haggar**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 30 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Report of the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

N'Djamena, 2-6 May 2000

Introduction

The thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in N'Djamena from 2 to 6 May 2000.

The following States members took part in the meeting: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe. Rwanda was absent.

Representatives of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) also participated in the work. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) was represented by His Excellency Mr. Nelson Cosme, Deputy Secretary-General for Human Integration, Peace, Stability and Security.

The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by his representative, Mr. Hamidou Diawara, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) resident coordinator in N'Djamena;
- A message from the Secretary-General of OAU, read out by his representative Mr. Léonard Emile Ognimba, senior official of OAU;
- An address by His Excellency Mr. Nelson Cosme, Deputy Secretary-General for Human Integration, Peace, Stability and Security of ECCAS;
- An address by His Excellency Mr. Nagoum Yamassoum, Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad.

Adoption of the agenda

The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Interim report of the Bureau

3. Evaluation of the implementation of previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee:

   A. Establishment of an early warning mechanism;

   B. Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa;

   C. Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa;

   D. Establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy;

   E. Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX).

4. Consideration of the implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa

5. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

6. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters among the countries of Central Africa

7. Freedom of movement for certain categories of nationals of member States within ECCAS

8. Preparation for the subregional conference on refugees in Central Africa

9. Date and place of the next meeting

10. Other matters

11. Adoption of the report of the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee

Conduct of work

I. Interim report of the Bureau

The Committee took note of the interim report presented by His Excellency Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad, in his capacity as Chairman of the Bureau at the ministerial level.

The Committee welcomed the efforts made by the Bureau to date to discharge the mandates entrusted to it by the twelfth Ministerial Meeting, particularly:

- The submission to the United Nations General Assembly of the draft resolution on the work of the Advisory Committee which was adopted at the twelfth Ministerial Meeting;

- The assistance provided by the Committee to ECCAS in organizing a meeting of experts at Malabo in order to draw up a draft protocol on the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX);

- The assistance provided for the organization of the third special summit meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Central African countries in Malabo, which served as a framework for the adoption and signature of the Protocol on COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact;
- The initiatives undertaken to promote the restoration of peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the consolidation of peace in the Central African Republic;
- The steps taken within the context of preparations for the subregional conference on refugees;
- The approaches made to Canada for the implementation of the initiative entitled "Disarmament for development and peace" in respect of controlling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons;
- Awareness-raising among the countries of the subregion with regard to the need for ratification of the Non-Aggression Pact, the Protocol on COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact;
- The organization of the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting;
- The steps taken for the effective launching of the early warning mechanism and the establishment of the subregional centre for human rights and democracy.

II. Evaluation of the implementation of the previous decisions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee

A. Establishment of an early warning mechanism

The Committee welcomed the contacts which are under way between the ECCAS secretariat and the Government of Gabon in relation to the refurbishing of the building which is to house the headquarters of the early warning mechanism.

The Committee took note with interest of the approaches made by the Government of Gabon to the United States of America with regard to the financing of the mechanism, and the goodwill expressed by that country in that respect.

A mandate was given to the Bureau to take the necessary steps, in conjunction with the Committee secretariat, for holding a high-level seminar on the organization and operation of an early warning mechanism.

B. Organization of military exercises in connection with peacekeeping operations between the armed forces of the countries of Central Africa

After welcoming the success of the Gabon 2000 exercise, the Committee reiterated its interest in organizing a joint military exercise, even on a limited scale, by mobilizing the resources of the Central African countries themselves.

In this respect, the Committee recommended that a meeting of the chiefs of staff of the Central African countries should be convened before the fourteenth

Ministerial Meeting in order to review the Biyongho-98 exercise, revise its costs downwards and determine the division of contributions among the different countries.

Gabon, the country which is to accommodate the exercise, was approached about hosting the meeting.

A mandate was given to the Bureau to take all the necessary steps for the organization of this meeting.

C. Establishment of a subregional parliament in Central Africa

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the progress of the project to establish a subregional parliament in Central Africa and in particular the preparation of a draft protocol for the organization of that institution which is under way in the ECCAS secretariat.

It welcomed the approaches made by the ECCAS secretariat to the various national parliaments and certain inter-African institutions with a view to establishing a subregional parliament in Central Africa.

The Committee called upon ECCAS to make the necessary arrangements to convene, before the fourteenth Ministerial Meeting, a meeting of subregional experts and parliamentarians to study the modalities for setting up the network of parliamentarians established by the Heads of State of the subregion in Malabo in June 1999 and securing the financing necessary for its operation.

D. Establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the appropriation by the United Nations General Assembly, under its resolution 54/249 of 23 December 1999, of an amount of one million dollars for the establishment of the subregional centre for human rights and democracy. In that respect, it expressed its gratitude to the United Nations.

It welcomed the forthcoming visit to Cameroon of a mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in order to define the modalities of the establishment of the subregional centre for human rights and democracy.

It welcomed with satisfaction the information provided on the forthcoming visit to Central Africa of Ms. Mary Robinson, High Commissioner for Human Rights, and her commitment to give full support to the projects relating to the promotion and protection of human rights in the subregion.

E. Implementation of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX)

The Committee welcomed the signature by the African Heads of State and Government, at their meeting in Malabo on 24 February 2000, of the protocol concerning COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact. It also welcomed the

ratification by Cameroon of those two major legal instruments and the fact that other member States had also begun ratification procedures.

It expressed the hope that those procedures would be completed rapidly, so that COPAX might begin functioning as soon as possible.

The Bureau was mandated to convene, in conjunction with the Committee secretariat, an expert meeting of member States in order to consider proposed legislative mandates for the early warning mechanism, the Central African multinational force and the defence commission for the Central African countries. It was decided that the meeting would be held in Yaoundé in the second half of June 2000, before the next summit meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Central African countries.

III. Implementation of the recommendations of the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa

After reviewing the recommendations formulated by the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena from 25 to 27 October 1999, the Committee welcomed the remarkable efforts of the countries of the subregion to implement the recommendations.

In particular, it noted with satisfaction:

- The elaboration by several member States of the Committee of national good-governance plans;
- The creation in some of those States of national structures to coordinate the campaign against the proliferation of small arms and of committees to follow up the Committee' s recommendations;
- The strict regulation of the activities of private security firms, and particularly the fact that such firms were prohibited from possessing arms;
- The launching of programmes to promote awareness of the dangers of firearms in certain countries, particularly by means of radio broadcasts;
- The implementation of programmes to collect and destroy arms;
- The inclusion in peace or ceasefire agreements of clauses on arms collection;
- The strengthening of border controls, particularly by setting up new frontier posts;
- The implementation of training programmes for border guards.

The Committee recommended that member countries should intensify measures to implement the recommendations of the Conference and, more generally, should spare no effort in the campaign against the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms, taking into account the dangers of this scourge for peace, security, stability and development in the subregion.

The Committee recommended that the Bureau, in conjunction with the Committee secretariat, should hold consultations with member countries on the

implementation of the measures called for by the Conference at the subregional level, particularly:

- Harmonization of national legislation in the Central African countries to combat the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms;
- Establishment of a standard arms registration system at the national and subregional levels and of a database of arms stocks for each country, of arms dealers and transport agents;
- Consideration of regional arms collection projects, accompanied by small-scale development projects to promote the economic and social reintegration of offenders, in collaboration with donors and international bodies.

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

Angola

The Committee expressed concern at the continuing situation in Angola as a result of the refusal of Jonas Savimbi, leader of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), to comply with the terms of the 1994 Lusaka Protocol and of the relevant Security Council resolutions. It welcomed the efforts of the Government of Angola to end the war and restore peace in Angola.

It appealed for strict application of the sanctions imposed by the Security Council against UNITA and urged all the States of the subregion to consider the Fowler report on sanctions against UNITA and the recommendations contained therein as a good basis for ending violations of the United Nations sanctions regime.

The Committee welcomed the decision by Mr. Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola, to reintegrate civilian population groups, military forces and other UNITA officials who abandoned Mr. Savimbi.

It welcomed the announcement by President dos Santos that general elections would be held in 2001, and called upon all political parties to take part therein.

Burundi

The Committee warmly welcomed the designation of President Nelson Mandela to mediate in the issue of Burundi; this responded to concern expressed by the Committee at its previous meeting.

It also welcomed the positive developments since the appointment of the new mediator, particularly the holding of talks involving all the political forces in the country.

The Committee expressed its serious concern at the persistence of massacres which continued to afflict innocent civilians in Burundi. It urgently appealed to the armed rebellion to agree to participate effectively in the current talks under the mediation of President Mandela.

It called for the prompt proclamation of a ceasefire in order to put an end to the massacres of innocent civilians, and urged all parties to the Lusaka Agreement on the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement its provisions, particularly those on the disarming of Burundian armed groups.

In order to consolidate the ongoing peace process, the Committee appealed to the international community to rapidly resume bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Burundi, in order to relieve the hardship which the Burundian people had been enduring for more than seven years.

Cameroon

The Committee welcomed the growing climate of peace and stability in Cameroon.

It noted with satisfaction the implementation of the national plan for good governance in Cameroon, and the remarkable efforts made by the country' s authorities in the campaign against corruption.

The Committee expressed deep concern at the information provided by the delegation of Cameroon on the persistent attempts at infiltration and repeated acts of provocation by Nigerian forces on the Bakassi peninsula, and called on the two parties to refrain from any action that could heighten tensions while awaiting the decision of the International Court of Justice, which Cameroon had seized of the matter.

The Committee, while reiterating its appeal to the international community and friendly countries to assist in maintaining the peace between Cameroon and Nigeria while awaiting the verdict of the International Court of Justice, requested the Court to take the necessary steps to ensure a rapid conclusion of the proceeding pending before it.

The Committee again urged Nigeria to comply strictly with the interim measures of protection laid down by the Court in its ruling of 15 March 1996, and called upon the two parties to refrain from taking any action that could create difficulties for the application of the final judgement of the Court.

The Committee expressed concern at the ongoing cross-border phenomenon of roadblocks, the illegal circulation of small-calibre weapons and weapons of war and the increase in organized crime.

It welcomed the determination of the Government of Cameroon to combat insecurity, the commendable efforts it had made in that regard and the notable success already achieved.

Congo

The Committee was informed about the positive developments in the situation in the Congo. It welcomed the return of peace and security throughout the territory, due in particular to the effective implementation of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities agreements concluded on 16 November 1999 at Pointe-Noire and on 29 December 1999 at Brazzaville between the Forces Armeés Congolaises and the

armed factions through the mediation of the President of the Gabonese Republic, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo.

It urged the committee formed to monitor those agreements to continue its efforts, in particular with regard to the demobilization of former members of the militia and the collection of weapons, in order to establish conditions favourable to a national dialogue intended to define the modalities for reconstruction of the Congo, consolidation of national unity and renewal of the democratic process.

The Committee appealed to the international community for urgent and significant assistance to the Congo in taking the necessary action to consolidate the peace.

Gabon

The Committee was pleased at the positive developments in the situation in Gabon, characterized by the free exercise of activities by political parties, normal functioning of institutions and a general climate of peace and political stability.

It welcomed the valuable assistance provided to Gabon by certain friendly countries and by OAU in implementing a programme of assistance to ease the suffering of refugees located in Gabon.

It expressed concern at the time it was taking the agencies concerned to get the assistance to the refugees. It requested the High Commissioner for Refugees and the countries concerned to make every effort to ensure the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of the refugees in their countries of origin.

Finally, the Committee took note with interest of the summit on growth and poverty reduction which had taken place in Libreville in January 2000.

Equatorial Guinea

The Committee welcomed the progress in the democratization process in Equatorial Guinea and the forthcoming municipal elections, in which all the political parties had announced their participation.

The Committee commended the Government for its efforts to promote a culture of democracy in the country and welcomed the financial assistance recently granted to political parties.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee welcomed the efforts made by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, current Chairman of OAU, to implement the Lusaka Agreement and the Summit held on 30 April 2000 at Algiers to facilitate that goal.

The Committee welcomed the decisions taken during the meeting of the Political Committee held at Kampala from 6 to 8 April 2000, in particular the adoption by all the parties to the conflict of a plan for the disengagement and redeployment of troops, in accordance with the Lusaka Agreement, and their decision to order a total cessation of hostilities beginning on 14 April 2000.

The Committee strongly urged all the parties to respect scrupulously their commitments in that regard so as to consolidate the ceasefire.

The Committee made an urgent appeal to the United Nations Security Council to move as quickly as possible to phase 2 of the deployment of the United Nations Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee expressed its grave concern at the continuing illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the occupation forces and appealed for an immediate halt to these practices.

It welcomed the proposal of the United Nations Secretary-General to establish a group of independent experts to investigate the illegal exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It strongly reaffirmed the obligation of all the parties to respect the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It stressed the need for all the parties to provide assurances and guarantees of security for the countries of the Great Lakes region.

Central African Republic

The Committee welcomed the gradual restoration of peace in the Central African Republic and the commendable efforts made by the Government, with the assistance of the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) to consolidate the peace.

It also commended the President, Mr. Ange Félix Patassé, for his commitment to national reconciliation and reconstruction of the country, and welcomed the easing of tensions and the renewed confidence between the various political forces, which was illustrated in particular by the return of the opposition deputies to the National Assembly since March 2000.

The Committee expressed its concern at the upsurge in acts of banditry carried out in the hinterland by means of roadblocks. It noted with satisfaction the measures taken by the Central African Government to combat insecurity, *inter alia*, the establishment on 24 April 2000 of a Secretariat of State for Disarmament and the forthcoming restructuring of the armed forces and security forces.

The Committee also welcomed the meeting of donors soon to be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York to secure the means to support the consolidation of peace in the Central African Republic.

Sao Tome and Principe

The Committee expressed its concern at the deterioration of the socio-economic situation in Sao Tome and Principe due to the implementation of the measures provided for in the structural adjustment programme concluded with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

It commended the efforts of the Government of Sao Tome and Principe to maintain a climate of peace and stability in the country and welcomed the cordial

tone of the negotiations with neighbouring countries on the delimitation of maritime borders.

Chad

The Committee welcomed the efforts made by the Government of the Republic of Chad to establish a consensual and participatory democracy. It welcomed with satisfaction the promulgation by the Government of Chad, under its policy of good governance and management, of an act prohibiting financial embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds.

The Committee commended the efforts made to reinforce the process of national reconciliation and noted with satisfaction the continuing policy of dialogue initiated by President Idriss Déby.

It appealed to all parties in Chad to respond positively to this desire for dialogue and to choose conciliation over confrontation in order to preserve the higher interests of the Chadian people.

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the success the Chadian security forces had had in combating insecurity, in particular in preventing roadblocks.

The Committee received a progress report on the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project and welcomed the progress made.

V. Intergovernmental cooperation in security matters in Central Africa

The Committee took note with satisfaction of the actions and initiatives taken by the States members within the framework of cooperation in security matters aimed, in particular, at lessening tensions and combating insecurity in the border areas, as well as making it possible to have exchanges between the various national structures dealing with these questions.

In view of the cross-border nature of most of the security problems in the subregion and the need to respond to them in a joint and concerted manner, the Committee again strongly recommended greater cooperation and dialogue among the security forces of the Central African countries, particularly within the framework of periodic meetings and the organization of joint operations.

The Committee particularly welcomed:

- The contacts at the summit among the Heads of State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of Angola, which had resulted in the signature at Luanda in December 1999 of a framework agreement among those three countries for the creation of a tripartite joint security commission;
- The cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo, which has led to the repatriation to the latter of refugees who had fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

- The contacts and exchanges between Gabon and the Congo regarding security issues; and
- The collaboration between Equatorial Guinea and the Congo which had resulted in the return to the Congo by the authorities of Equatorial Guinea of a boat that had been hijacked as well as of the hijackers.

The Committee expressed its concern with regard to the upsurge in organized crime and insecurity in the countries of the subregion, particularly the development of the phenomenon of roadblocks. It recommended the intensification of information exchange and the organization of joint operations to combat this scourge. It recommended that a high-level meeting should be held on the question, aimed at setting up a suitable legal framework for cooperation in the matter.

It stressed the need for closer cooperation among the security services of various countries with a view to combating the trans-border trade in stolen vehicles.

The Committee also recommended the creation of a fund to combat crime. The Bureau was mandated to study and propose ways and means of allocating sufficient resources to the fund.

Recalling the importance to the subregion' s peace and security of the Mutual Assistance Pact concluded on 24 February 2000 among the countries of Central Africa, the Committee invited the countries that had signed the Pact to ratify it. It recommended that the Bureau should draw the attention of those countries that had not already ratified the Pact of the need to do so so that it could enter into force before the end of the year 2000.

Aware of the need to strengthen cooperation for peace and security in the subregion, the Committee welcomed the signing of the agreement on criminal police cooperation in April 1999 at the meeting of the Committee of Central African Police Chiefs in Yaoundé. It appealed to those countries which had not yet done so to take all necessary steps to proceed to the rapid signing of this text and guarantee its full effectiveness.

VI. Free movement of certain categories of citizens of States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

While stressing the importance and topical character of this question and after having taken note of the presentation made on the issue by the Under-Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, the Committee determined that it should be examined in a more appropriate framework, in this case by the competent authorities of ECCAS.

VII. Preparation of the subregional conference on the question of refugees in Central Africa

Turning to the question of the subregional conference on the question of refugees in Central Africa, the Committee stressed the importance of this meeting,

in view of the seriousness of the refugee problem in Central Africa and the threats it posed to the economic, social and security situation in the subregion.

The Committee recommended that the Conference should examine such questions as:

- The causes of refugee flows in Central Africa;
- The living conditions of refugees in the host country;
- Assistance to refugees;
- The rights and obligations of refugees;
- The problem of the repatriation and reintegration of refugees, of their transfer to another host country or of their absorption;
- Relations between host countries and countries of origin;
- Assistance to host countries; and
- The question of displaced persons.

The Committee welcomed the measures already taken by the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs in preparation for this conference.

The Bureau was mandated to make, in cooperation with the Committee secretariat, all approaches to the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees necessary to collect the information and data needed to prepare adequately for that conference, which would be held prior to the fourteenth Ministerial Meeting.

VIII. Date and place of the next meeting

The Committee decided to hold its fourteenth Ministerial Meeting during the second week of August 2000 at Bujumbura in Burundi.

IX. Other matters

The Committee stressed the need for the Bureau to meet at least once prior to each Ministerial Meeting.

The Committee urged member States to make regular contributions to the trust fund intended to finance its activities.

The Committee requested the Bureau to closely follow the ongoing conflict situations in Central Africa, to increase its involvement in peace and security initiatives in the subregion and to report to the Committee on the topic at each meeting.

The Committee welcomed the visit of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to several countries of the subregion on the occasion of the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, and adopted a Declaration on that topic at the close of its work.

Done at N'Djamena on 6 May 2000

Appendix I

Declaration

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the member States of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, meeting at N'Djamena on 5 and 6 May 2000, on the occasion of the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of the Committee:

Considering the essential role of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in the world,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa,

Bearing in mind also the words of his recent report entitled "We the peoples ...",

Considering the persistence of tensions, crises and conflicts in Central Africa,

Taking note in particular of the tireless efforts of the United Nations to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts in the Central African subregion, *inter alia*, by establishing and providing continued support for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,

Pay warm tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for all his initiatives in favour of peace, security and stability in our subregion, especially in Angola, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Salute his recent visit to Central Africa (Gabon, the Central African Republic, and Cameroon) in conjunction with the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of our Committee, and welcome the message he delivered on peace security and stability on that occasion, and

Encourage the Secretary-General in his efforts to strengthen the initiatives in order to restore peace, stability and security to Africa in general and to Central Africa in particular.

Done at N'Djamena on 6 May 2000